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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DOHA 000281

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TAGS: [PREL PHUM SU QA](#)  
SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY GRATION'S POSITIVE MEETINGS ON  
DARFUR WITH PM, MINISTER OF STATE

REF: 2008 DOHA 854

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

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(C) KEY POINTS  
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-- Special Envoy for Darfur Scott Gration and Qatar's PM Hamad bin Jassim agreed that the sooner an agreement on Darfur is reached the better for all of Sudan. Shaykh Hamad said an agreement on Darfur might serve as a model elsewhere in Sudan.

-- They pledged to work together on SE Gration's priorities: establishing a cease-fire, bringing back NGO capability, and providing long-term economic development.

-- The PM welcomed SE Gration's offer to weigh in with Egypt on Qatar's behalf in mediating Darfur and encouraged discussions that would stop the bleeding along Sudan's border with Chad.

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(C) COMMENTS  
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-- Despite continuing to ail as he recuperates from recent surgery in the United States, the PM was as enthusiastic as we have seen him in some time.

-- SE Gration's offering to give Doha a helping hand in Cairo, and his willingness to take good news about Qatar to the White House, had a positive effect.

End Key Points and Comments.

¶1. (C) Special Envoy for Sudan Scott Gration (joined by Ambassador, Senior Representative for Sudan Tim Shortley and P/E Chief Rice) expressed his appreciation to PM Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani April 28 for Qatar's work to bring peace to Darfur and Sudan. He also stressed that President Obama is aware of Qatar's efforts and hopes to report back to him soon that Qatar helped broker a cease-fire on Darfur.

¶2. (C) The PM thanked SE Gration for briefing the President on Qatar's role and pledged to work closely with the United States and the international community as full partners. Sometimes this will require taking turns playing "good cop/bad cop" but we want this mediation to be successful. Qatar has no political or economic stake in Darfur other than helping the Sudanese people achieve a normal life.

¶3. (C) Shaykh Hamad said the heart of the problem in mediating the Darfur conflict is that there are "too many cooks" in the kitchen. Each group wants to be THE

opposition group and desires a monopoly on discussions. Khalil Ibrahim of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), for example, threatens to leave if "so and so comes" to Doha for discussions. This is not the way to make progress. We need inclusivity and the support of both Khartoum and the rebel groups to make forward progress.

¶4. (C) ROAD AHEAD: Qatar, said the PM, hopes for an agreement on Darfur by summer. To make this happen, an agreement between Sudan and Chad is vital. The Libyans are taking lead on this; any signing ceremony would be held in Tripoli between these parties consistent with Libya's long-standing role on this even though the discussions are taking place in Doha.

¶5. (C) SE Gration responded by saying he sees three things that need to happen quickly. First, he underscored the sense of urgency in bringing back NGO capability. This is happening. Second, providing long-term development assistance is vital. Third, but coming first and most urgent in sequence, is establishing a cease-fire and an end of hostilities.

¶6. (C) On development assistance, the PM responded that the March Arab League Summit in Doha set aside an 8 million USD donation for this purpose. "Send me a letter" in Qatar's capacity as Arab League President, and I will work to get you the money, requested Shaykh Hamad.

¶7. (C) SE Gration offered to take the PM up on his offer and began outlining the next steps he envisions on Sudan. To show support for Qatar's initiative on Darfur, SE Gration told the PM he would stop in Cairo and give Qatar

DOHA 00000281 002 OF 003

full U.S. backing. The PM said this is very important, since Egypt alone cannot solve the problems of Darfur but can act as a spoiler, adding that one enticement to the Egyptians could be that success in Darfur could serve as a model for making progress elsewhere in Sudan.

¶8. (C) After Cairo, SE Gration said he plans to visit Chad and give President Deby confidence to reach out to Sudan and cut support for JEM. He added that he would urge Khalil Ibrahim to participate in the Qatar Initiative and travel to Doha for talks. This U.S. pressure pleased the PM, who shared that he had already offered Ibrahim economic incentives to participate.

¶9. (C) NEED FOR TARGET DATES: SE Gration hoped that Khalil and representatives of other groups could meet in Doha May 4-5 to work out a cease-fire. The PM said he did not know if the dates would work, but stressed that he and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Al-Mahmoud were "in a hurry" to bring the negotiations to the end. Al-Mahmoud "is tired but very much wants to succeed. We need to lock people in a hotel and force them to finish an agreement. We will need your help and that of other parties. I will encourage" Al-Mahmoud to work out the best dates with you.

¶10. (C) SE Gration thanked the PM and offered to give the Minister of State some words of encouragement in their follow-on meeting. The Special Envoy stressed the need for targets to keep progress from slipping. This is not about seeking credit, added SE Gration, but about ending the suffering and focusing on the approximately 450 days we have before there is a referendum on southern Sudan's future. The U.S. "wants Qatar to succeed. We want to be your partner."

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AL-MAHMOUD MEETING  
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¶11. (C) At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SE Gration shared with Minister of State Ahmed Al-Mahmoud the

highlights of his meeting with the PM, emphasizing the idea of convening groups in Doha May 4-5 and U.S. determination to widen participation among rebel groups.

¶12. (C) Al-Mahmoud responded by recounting how Qatar became involved in Darfur mediation (see reftel) and concluded by presenting the main challenges he sees now. First, there are too many groups with competing agendas. Second, the groups are increasingly fragmented and splintering. Third, there is an urgent need to find a mechanism to implement a cease-fire. Finally, there is the challenge of broadening civil society. After listing the challenges, Al-Mahmoud asked SE Gration for his views on the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) and whether it is a sound basis for moving forward today.

¶13. (C) SE Gration said 80 percent of the DPA is "pretty good." Perhaps, he said, we should create a new "Darfur Security Agreement (DSA)" that would include a cease-fire provision. At any rate, he advised Al-Mahmoud to change the name of the agreement, even if Qatar and UN/African Union Mediator Djibril Bassole keep many of the DPA's concepts.

¶14. (C) On security arrangements, SE Gration said UNAMID is vital to monitoring any cease-fire, and the groups themselves must also take part in enforcement monitoring. SE Gration voiced the need to incentivize development assistance to supporters of the cease-fire, all the while giving groups discretion on spending money within broad guidelines.

¶15. (C) The longer the cease-fire lasts, the more money the group would receive to help its constituents. SE Gration pointed out that the international community would likely spend this money on developmental assistance anyway, but by linking it to security "we get something more out of it." He closed by noting the need for "fair and equitable" disarmament following a cease-fire. Once there is security in Darfur, its residents will be able to prosper economically, said SE Gration. Al-Mahmoud agreed and said he had passed the same message to opposition groups.

¶16. (C) MAKING FORWARD PROGRESS: What we need to do, said SE Gration, is "get people on the train and start it moving." Even an interim cease-fire would help generate momentum, he added. JEM is a challenge because it does not want to go forward with even a partial exchange of prisoners with the Government of Sudan. It's all or

DOHA 00000281 003 OF 003

nothing, and that is not acceptable to the other side. Pushing for a cessation of hostilities along Sudan's border with Chad is also greatly needed.

¶17. (C) SE Gration closed the meeting by noting that "Darfur could look like a holiday if we can't prevent" the bigger problems that could lie ahead for the rest of Sudan. It is "easier to prevent than fix" problems. The referendum in the south looms large, as it is only 450 or so days ahead. Al-Mahmoud agreed that time is of the essence, noting that groups must take advantage of this window of opportunity. The challenge is getting them to think "not of themselves but of the poor people on the ground in Darfur."

¶18. (C) CHAD/SUDAN: Over lunch, UN/African Union Mediator Bassole warned that President Deby cannot unilaterally take decisions on behalf of Chad, which is a problem in pushing forward on a Sudan-Chad agreement. Bassole made a pitch for UNSC endorsement of any agreement to make international monitoring and compliance easier. Senior Representative for Sudan Tim Shortley liked the idea, noting that such a requirement could be included in the June UNAMID rollover.

¶19. (C) Asked for the purpose of the upcoming meeting

between delegations from Chad and Sudan, Al-Mahmoud described the encounter as a "preparatory meeting" designed to figure out "what is missing" in the relationship between Chad and Sudan that prevents us from moving forward. Bassole said he had concluded that both countries have so many issues of internal dialogue that they can't reach a cross-border agreement. Still, he agreed with Al-Mahmoud that something more was involved, and Al-Mahmoud underscored that there was a time not so long ago when Chad and Sudan maintained excellent relations.

LeBaron